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Verification Instructions

Detailed information about Verification can be found in the [USDA Eligibility Manual](#), starting on page 65.

Verification Overview

Verification is confirmation of a family's Eligibility for Free and Reduced Price school meals. Only Eligibilities determined through the family application process are subject to Verification. Verification is conducted once per school year, beginning October 1.

The Verification Process requires that one person from the School Food Authority or SU collect information from all schools and report back to the State Agency about Verification. This one person is called the 'Verification Official'.

The Verification Process asks a family to send in additional documentation to support the information submitted on their Free and Reduced Price Meal Application. We Must Check Your Application (in the [Vermont Appendix](#)) is the letter used to request the additional information from families.

When to Conduct Verification

After all September application determinations are made, the Verification Official asks each school in the School Food Authority for the number of applications with benefit determinations (paid meal / denied applications are not subject to Verification). The Verification Official needs the total count of 'Free Eligible Based on Income', 'Free Eligible Based on Category' and 'Reduced Eligible' applications for the School Food Authority to calculate number to verify. The number of Error Prone Applications is also gathered.

After the September application counts are collected (after September 30) the Verification Official completes the [Verification Calculation Tool](#), and delegates a number of applications to be verified to school Approving Officials.

If you must Verify One or More Applications

Since Verification must be completed by November 15th, begin Verification as soon as you are delegated your number to Verify.

If your School Food Authority is on the [Ameliorative Action List](#), randomly select your applications to verify from your error prone applications. Error Prone applications are income applications within \$100 per month of the applicable Income Eligibility Guideline.

If your School Food Authority is not on the Ameliorative Action List, randomly select your applications to verify from all the applications used to provide benefits. Randomly means that all applications have an equal chance of being selected.

Send the We Must Check Your Application form (from the [Vermont Appendix](#)) to ask families for additional information.

If the family does not respond to your request within your designated time frame (typically one week to ten days), then follow up at least once. Follow up might include a second written request or a phone call, or both.

When the family returns the documentation, the Verification Official must evaluate the documentation to determine if the household is eligible for the benefits they have been receiving. The household must also be notified of the Verification results.

If the documentation submitted indicates a change in benefits, the benefits must be changed in your internal school systems, according to the required 3 day (increasing benefits) or 10 day (reducing benefits) timeframe. The household must be notified (use Application Verification Results in the [Vermont Appendix](#)), and verification results must also be communicated to your Verification Official so that the official can submit the required State Agency Verification report FNS 742.

If a family does not respond to Verification, they are no longer eligible to receive meal benefits. If the family reapplies after benefits have been taken away, they must still complete Verification.

For questions about Verification, contact Nancy Lewis nancy.lewis@vermont.gov (802)479-1207 or Laurie Colgan (802) 479-1187